

The following Government Bills were passed at Third Reading since the House resumed:

Bill 50, *Provincial Animal Welfare Act*;
Bill 77, *Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act*;
Bill 90, *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*, (given Royal Assent).

The following Government Bills were passed at Second Reading and sent to Committee:

Bill 85, *Photo Card Act*;
Bill 87, *Towing Industry Act*;
Bill 97, *Increasing Access to Qualified Health Professionals for Ontarians Act*;
Bill 99, *Lake Simcoe Protection Act*;
Bill 100, *Ideas for the Future Act*;
Bill 101, *Home Energy Rating Act*;
Bill 105, *Waste Reporting Act*;
Bill 108, *Apology Act*.

The following Opposition Party Bills were passed at Second Reading and sent to Committee:

Bill 92, *Ministry of Government Services Amendment Act* (PC);

Bill 98, *Signage to Promote Ontario Grown Agricultural Food Products Act* (PC).

The following Government Bill is still in Second Reading debate:

Bill 103, *Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act*.

The following Opposition Party Bills were lost at Second Reading:

Bill 79, *Northern York Region Power Conservation Act* (NDP);
Bill 107, *Training for Workers Act* (NDP) ruled out of order and removed from the order papers.

The full text of all Bills can be found at www.ontla.on.ca under the section Bills and Lawmaking, Current Session.

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House Reconvenes Amid Liberal Cabinet Shuffle, Tory Dissension and NDP Leadership Race

The Legislature reconvened for the Fall Session on Monday, September 22, 2008. The week prior to that, Premier McGuinty shuffled his Cabinet for the second time since the October 2007 provincial election. The following changes were made in the shuffle:

Sandra Pupatello heads a new International Trade and Industry Ministry;

Michael Bryant becomes Minister for Economic Development;

Brad Duguid replaces Bryant in Aboriginal Affairs;

Replacing Duguid at Labour is Peter Fonseca;

Monique Smith replaces Fonseca in Tourism;

The Revenue Ministry goes once again to Finance Minister Dwight Duncan.

At the same time, maverick Progressive Conservative Bill Murdoch was formally kicked out of the party's caucus for criticizing leader John Tory. Acting Opposition Leader, Bob Runciman, sent Murdoch a letter confirming his immediate removal from the Conservative Caucus.

Murdoch had said it was time for Tory to consider taking another job, and refused to back down after being suspended from the Caucus.

The NDP leadership race to replace outgoing leader, Howard Hampton, got underway as candidates registered and began signing up new members. Officially registered as leadership candidates are Gilles Bisson, Andrea Horwath, Michael Prue and Peter Tabuns.

Nine all-candidates debates are scheduled across the province, with the first one kicking off on November 8, 2008 in Toronto. Debates will also take place in London, Kingston, Ottawa, Hamilton, Sudbury, Timmins and Thunder Bay between November and

mid-February. Dates and locations will be posted in the near future at ontariodp.com.

The new leader will be chosen by a one-member-one-vote system culminating at the Party Convention on March 7, 2009 in Hamilton.

Liberals Turn Blind Eye to Private For-Profit Clinics

On October 6, 2008 the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) released a report that raised alarm bells about the practices and far-reaching effects of private for-profit clinics operating across Canada.

The OHC report found that not only do these clinics charge steep enrollment and annual fees for medically necessary services, are only accessible to a very small number of rich Ontarians, are double or triple billing OHIP, private insurers, WSIB, and users – they devastate the public non-profit health care system.

NDP Health Critic, France Gélinas, blamed the McGuinty Liberals for failing to prevent the expansion of private, for-profit clinics in Ontario.

Gélinas reminded Health Minister Caplan of his government's 2003

promise to “support the prohibition of two-tier medicine, extra billing and user fees,” and asked that the government honour these promises and take concrete steps to protect the public health care system.

Gélinas spoke of the harm that these private, for-profit clinics do as they poach the public system of its technicians, physicians and other health professionals, and leave the vast majority of Ontarians to face longer waiting times and reduced access to necessary medical procedures.

Gélinas called on the McGuinty Liberals to “develop a real plan that can put a stop – once and for all – to the operation of these private for-profit clinics and enforce the *Canada Health Act's* commitment to equal access to health care for all Ontarians.”

Opposition Slams Liberal Economic Statement

On Wednesday, October 22, 2008, the McGuinty government released its fall Economic Statement. The Statement drew criticism from unions, the Chamber of Commerce and opposition parties alike.

OFL President, Wayne Samuelson, had called on the government to maintain spending on government services, invest in poverty-reduction measures – such as

affordable housing and increased benefits for low-income Ontarians, invest in infrastructure and scrap P3 financing, invest in Ontario industries and adjustment assistance for laid-off workers, and establish a Labour Market Partners Forum.

Finance Minister Dwight Duncan instead announced that Ontario would run a \$500 million deficit and would delay the hiring of 9,000 nurses and 50 family health teams, and defer some school repairs, in what he called “a balanced response to today's global reality.”



Duncan also cautioned cities, school boards, hospitals and universities to expect lower than anticipated funding in the new fiscal year.

NDP Leader, Howard Hampton, dismissed the statement as “nothing new.” “While other provinces are implementing buy-domestic policies, while other provinces are implementing a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit to keep manufacturing jobs in place, while other provinces are implementing reasonable industrial hydro rates to keep manufacturing jobs in place, what did the McGuinty Government do today?” Hampton asked. “Nothing. Absolutely nothing.”

“What's missing from the economic outlook,” said Hampton, “is a strategy to sustain jobs and to address the province's social safety net at a time when more Ontarians are slipping into poverty. The fallout from the province's declining fortunes will be felt next year,” he said. “This is the setting of the stage for municipalities, school boards and hospitals that are going to be left high and dry in about six months.”

